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A N E W H E R E S Y,
C O N C E R N I N G
T H E T R U E S O N S H I P
O F
J E S U S C H R I S T:

A SERMON from JOHN ix. 35.—*Dost thou believe
on the SON of GOD?*

Preached at HOWGATE; on Monday the 30th of
June, 1777: Being a Thanksgiving-day, after a Cele-
bration of our LORD's Supper.

W I T H S O M E
E N L A R G E M E N T S A N D E X P L A N A T O R Y N O T E S.

A S A L S O

An APPENDIX: Concerning the Wonderful Theory
of ANIMALCULAR GENERATION; as lately
brought in, by a Clergyman of the Church of Scotland,
for the *Proper Ground of the Fundamental Article* of the
Christian Religion!

By ADAM GIB, Minister of the Gospel at Edinburgh.

The S E C O N D E D I T I O N, C O R R E C T E D.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

AS the present is the first instance, of my yielding to solicitations for the printing of what I had preached ; an apology for it is obvious, in the peculiarity of the occasion.

A book was published last year, under the following title, *viz.* [The TRUE SONSHIP of CHRIST *investigated* ; and his Person, Dignity and Offices, explained and confirmed ; from the Sacred Scriptures : By a CLERGYMAN] ; which *Clergyman* is commonly known to be,—the Reverend Mr *William Dalgließ*, minister of the Gospel at *Peebles*.

Upon hearing of this book,—as I supposed that it might be some trumping up of Dr *Ridgely's* scheme ; I had no curiosity to enquire for it, more than for the many other erroneous publications which are now so frequent. And a friend having brought it to my house, with a desire that I might read it,—yet without saying any thing about the principles which it contains ; I expressed an aversion, from employing

ploying my time in that manner : However he left it, undesired, behind him.

Having afterwards taken it up, at a vacant hour, I soon found the Scheme contained in it to be *quite new* ; and was gradually engaged in a close perusal of it. I had no sooner got through it, than I was called to preach at *Howgate* ; as mentioned on the title-page : And upon a view of preaching within about ten miles of the original seat of that Heresy, in the hearing of many whose minds I understood to have been somewhat jumbled or amused by it ; I reckoned it my duty to prepare the following discourse, for that occasion.

In extending my notes, I was under no necessity of confining myself, as much as possible, to the precise matter and words which I had delivered ; like one who publishes a quarrelled or misrepresented sermon, for his own vindication. Some extemporary enlargements, especially in the doctrinal and practical parts, could not be recollected ; but some others are added, especially in the argumentative part of the discourse.

And it may not be improper, in this preface, to make some general observations upon that book. As,

1. The Author might have been left to please himself, without any contradiction,—in affecting a new-fashioned genteelness of style, about *investigating* things; were not a shocking idea presented to one's mind, by pretending to *investigate* (to search out and find out) even one of the highest divine mysteries. Yea a talking after this manner about such a mystery, as several times in that book as well as on the title-page,—bears some appearance, at least, of treating it with a presumptuous indignity.

2. The manner of writing there used, is perhaps the most audacious that was ever ventured upon by any man in like circumstances.—When one is appearing in the common cause of Christianity,—or on the side of a fundamental article of revealed religion, received and established in all Christian churches; he may modestly enough assume a firmness of tone, in his manner of defence: Yea ought to do so, in justice to the truth; that it may not be upon the matter betrayed, by a mealy-mouthed vindication of it.

But the matter is all otherways, in the present case.—The Author does not pretend that his scheme, built upon the Theory of *Animalcular Generation*, was ever broached by any body before him: And he boldly avows an attack

by

by it, upon what is the common faith of all the Christian churches. At the same time, though his scheme is miserably supported,—in a manner grossly absurd and sophistical ; yet he sets it out with the most dogmatic boldness. He pretends “ To establish this point, by unquestionable evidence ;”—that it “ has the universal voice of Revelation, joining in proof of it ;—a full and consistent proof, which to every Christian must be demonstration ;—no truth supported by clearer or more abundant evidence :” And that “ though it has not the recommendation of the general belief, it has what to every reasonable man and judicious Christian will be a much higher commendation ; it has the fullest and clearest testimony of Scripture ;—the countenance and support of every part of Revelation :” While the commonly received doctrine on this head, is said to be “ contrary to every principle of Scripture and reason ;” so that we cannot reject his conclusions “ as sensible men,—as judicious Christians.” *

Thus it is that he presumes to represent all other Christians, as lying in a state of universal stupidity about the principal doctrine of their Bibles ; and that they must forfeit all title, forsooth,

* Page 50, 76, 17, 79, 83, 192.

ooth, to the character of reasonable or sensible men and judicious Christians,—if they scruple to adopt his New Scheme. At so daring a manner in such a senseless and shameful cause, the reader may justly stare and wonder !

3. As what was supposed, from some intrinsic evidence, is understood to be the case ; that the book was mainly designed for people in *England*, now eminently a land of blasphemies against the Lord and against his Christ : It may pass well enough among many in that country, under the hackneyed pretences of freedom of enquiry and liberality of sentiment. But it was very absurd for the author to imagine, as in his preface,—that his way of maintaining “ our “ Saviour’s supreme Deity—will be no unse-“ sonable antidote to those *Arian* and *Socinian* “ errors which continue to pester the Christian “ Church :” For the men of these errors, with the *Antitrinitarians* and *Unitarians* now a- bounding in England, may find a strong support for their principles ; in a scheme which explodes all personal distinctions, of any personal proper- ties and relations, in the holy Trinity.

4. The author tells, in his preface, with regard to the discourses in his book ; that he “ has delivered the greatest part of them to a

“ numerous congregation, who are universally
“ satisfied that the explication given of this
“ matter is the scriptural and just one.” And
it is truly lamentable, that he had this to say ;
that a knowledge of the religion which they
profess, and a zeal for it, were at so low a pass
in his auditory : But there is no merit in it,
where persons *by good words and fair speeches de-
ceive the hearts of the simple.*

5. The author also tells, in his preface, with
regard to these discourses ; that “ he has sub-
“ mitted them to some of the most judicious
“ and learned of his Brethren, who have all ac-
“ knowledged the evidence of their truth ; and
“ urged the publication of them, as what might
“ be of real service to the interests of Christia-
“ nity.” And a sad matter it is, that he should
have any Brethren of this cast. But he ought
to have named them ; that the reproach may-
not fall, by a general charge, upon such as
are innocent.

The established Church of Scotland, in her
present declining state, has tolerated or over-
looked many gross errors among her ministers
and members. But this seems to be the first
instance, of her having to tolerate a most
downright and avowed stroke at the root of her
established

established doctrine, without even any pretence of the contrary ; by one of her ministers, who had solemnly engaged to maintain the same.—The Arian Dr *Lindsay*, when he could no longer profess the established doctrine of the church of *England*, about the *Eternal Son of God* ; was so ingenuous, as to give up with his place and benefice in that church. And let any try to reconcile one's continuing in communion with a church, and under a standing engagement to maintain her established doctrine ; with an avowed overturning of it, from the very foundation.

As I am altogether unacquainted with the Author, I cannot be reasonably supposed to have him for an object of any personal animosity. But I cannot make a compliment to any man, of the ground upon which my faith and hope must rest for eternity ; no, not so much as by a softish way of speaking for it, when it is so fundamentally attacked.

I have now endeavoured to exoner myself, in this matter ; as I found myself providentially shut up. And if that Author shall be left to resume his pen, for a farther stroke at the common faith of Christians, by way of reply ; so far

far as I can presently suppose,—he will have the field quite clear to himself for me,

ADAM GIB.

EDINBURGH;

July 22. 1777.

Confession of Faith, chap. II. § 3.

“ In the Unity of the Godhead there be
“ three persons, of one substance, power and
“ eternity ; God the Father, God the Son,
“ and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of
“ none, neither begotten nor proceeding ; the
“ Son is eternally begotten of the Father ; the
“ Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the
“ Father and the Son.”

Larger Catechism.

“ *Ques.* 10. *What are the personal properties
of the three persons in the Godhead?*”

“ *Answ.* It is proper to the Father to beget
“ the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of
“ the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed
“ from the Father and the Son ; from all eter-
“ nity.”

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A SERMON from JOHN ix. 35.—*Doſt thou believe on the SON of GOD?*

AS we have been celebrating the great memorial of our LORD's death, in the sacrament of his supper,—we have high matter of thanksgiving still lying before us in the mystery of that ordinance, according to the profession which we now make; amidst all the matter of deep lamentation which is dreadfully taking place in the course of providence. Particularly, it is high matter of thanksgiving,—that CHRIST crucified is still set forth, for being *believed on in the world*; for being believed on by us, to our everlasting salvation: As to which, every one of us should be taking home the question in our text; *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?*

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In the first seven verses of this chapter, we have an account of an eminent miracle which our Lord had performed,—in opening the eyes of a man who had been born blind. In the next five verses, we have a short conversation betwixt the man and his neighbours,—on that subject. In the twenty-two verses following, downward to that in which our text lies,—we have a reasoning upon the subject, betwixt that man and the Pharisees: The issue of which was, that, on account of the man's honest confession of Jesus, according to what knowledge he then had,—*they cast him out*, or excommunicated him from church-privileges; as in the close of the 34th verse. Jesus, who is supposed to have gone to a distance from Jerusalem immediately after performing the miracle, *heard that they had cast him out*; as in the beginning of the 35th verse. He therefore, after some time, returned to Jerusalem; and sought out the man: For *taking him in* to a far higher privilege than that of bodily sight; the privilege of spiritual sight also. *And when he had found him*, he immediately put the question to him in our text; *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?*

This was evidently a question about a faith which the man yet had not; designed for begetting in him—a concern about having it. And this design was quickly gained, as appears from a question which he put to our Lord in the next verse; *who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* Our Lord gave a most gracious answer, in the 37th verse; revealing himself more expressly

prettily to this man, than he had done to any other person except the woman of Samaria* : *And Jesus said unto him, thou hast both seen him ; and it is he that talketh with thee.* Immediately, as in the 38th verse, —the man was blessed with that faith about which our Lord had questioned him : *And he said, Lord, I believe ; and he worshipped him.*

The question which our Lord did put to this man, he is still putting to each of us ; *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?* And as this question serves for turning believers to a trial of the faith which they have ; it also serves for awakening others to a concern about obtaining it,—as, without it, they must perish for ever : According to what our Lord had assured the Jews of ; *if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins* †.

The general doctrine of our text is,—that *The SON of GOD, manifested in our nature, is the peculiar object of faith.*

We may consider the *Object* and the *Exercise* of faith, here mentioned and meant ; concluding with some Improvement of the subject.

I. We may consider the *Object* of faith here mentioned : *The SON of GOD.*

This is evidently a character which our Lord gave of himself, under the appearance which he was then making to that man in human nature ; a character as truly

* John iv. 26. † John viii. 24.

truly belonging to him as the name *Jesus*, by which he was commonly called and known. He is frequently, in Scripture, called the *Son of God*,—and truly is so; the *proper*, the *only begotten Son of God* *,—as no other ever was, is, or can be.

There can be nothing more suitable, on the back of a sacramental occasion,—than to set forth the glory of Christ crucified, in opposition to all the ignominy which he lay under upon the cross: And an essay having been now made † to display his glory *as God*: we may next endeavour to display his glory *as the Son of God*.

There is a most momentous question upon this great subject: In what respect, or in what sense, is Jesus Christ the *Son of God*? We answer, according to the holy Scriptures, and the doctrine of all Christian Churches hitherto, (unless some synagogues of Arians and Socinians were to be reckoned such); that he is the **Son of God by ETERNAL GENERATION**: That he did not become so in time; but was so necessarily from all eternity, as the second Person of the glorious Trinity.—This fundamental doctrine of the Christian Religion, we may prove from the Scriptures of Truth; and may then remark some things upon the subject.

1st. We may prove, from holy Scripture, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God by *Eternal Generation*.—Some Scriptures give direct evidence, that his generation was from all eternity. But other evidences, that

* John iii. 18. Rom. viii. 32.

† In the preceding discourse from Psal. xlvi. 10.

that the character of SON belonged to him before his Incarnation, are the same upon the matter: As it was never pretended, nor can be imagined, that he acquired this character in any preceding point of time; and, therefore, his having been *the Son* before he was made flesh,—means his having been such by *Eternal Generation*. That he was so, we come now to prove. And,

1. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *Psal. ii. 7. I will declare the decree: The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

It is beyond all doubt, that CHRIST is the person spoken to by God the Father, in the latter part of this verse; considering the direct application which is made of it to him in the New Testament*: And that these words comprehend the proper doctrine of his *Generation*. The only question therefore is, about the *Day* here meant,—to which that generation is referred.

And, in general, it cannot be an interpreting, but a gross impugning of the text,—to change the assertion which it makes of Christ's Sonship *as what then was*, into a mere prophesy of it *as what would afterwards be*: Or to turn it off from all present respect to any day existing in David's time; as if it had only a prophetical respect, to some day in the future period of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh: So as the words might have this strange paraphrase imposed upon

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* *Acts xiii. 33. Heb. i. 5. and v. 5.*

on them ;—*Thou shalt become my Son about a thousand years hence ; in some future day, at such a distance of time, I will beget thee.*

The applications made of this text to Christ in the New Testament—bear not the smallest appearance of referring it to such a day : Farther than that, in one instance *, it is quoted with a reference to his Resurrection. But not so much as any hint is there given, that he did then *become* the Son of God ; he was then only *declared to be the Son of God with power* †—And an application is made of this text to him by the great Apostle, in such a manner as to bear a plain argument against explaining it of any such day : *Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest ; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee* ‡. For Christ was not but lately made an High Priest, only in or after his incarnation ; he was so before ||, as much as he was constituted a Mediator before,—even from everlasting : And his *Sonship* is there set forth, as of the same antiquity with his *Priesthood*.

This Psalm, indeed, was chiefly prophetical ; of great events about the Messiah and his kingdom, in the church-state among the Gentiles,—after his ascension. But it was not so prophetical, as to be a mere prophesy ; bearing no application to the state of matters in David's time. For the second Person of the glorious Trinity was then the *Messiah, the LORD's Anointed, the Christ* ; as he was then the Head and undertaking

* Acts xiii. 33. † Rom. i. 4. ‡ Heb. v. 5. || Psal. cx. 4.

dertaking Surety of the new covenant, yea had been so from all eternity : And he was then a *King upon the holy hill of Zion**. Accordingly, the conspiracy which took place in David's time, among the heathens around, against the interests of the Jewish church and nation, was principally a conspiracy *against the L ORD and against his Anointed* ; as the public interests of the Jewish people, did especially belong to these glorious parties.—Therefore no argument can be taken, with any shadow of reason, from the prophetical nature of this Psalm ; for turning the assertion which it makes of Christ's *Sonship*—into a mere prophesy.

It is manifestly inconsistent with every principle of justice to the form of the words, as well as to the doctrine contained in them,—to explain this *Sonship* as the *matter* of the *decree* ; and so as a future event, which the second Person of the holy Trinity had to declare concerning himself. The matter of the decree is evidently set forth, in the next two verses : And the *Sonship* is evidently set forth as the *ground* upon which that decree proceeds ; so that the *Sonship* must have been as antient as the decree, while every decree of God was from everlasting.

What *day*, then, are we to understand, as meant in the text referred to ? It cannot be understood, as properly denoting any one of *man's days*, either in David's time or afterwards. It can only be understood of *God's day*, the day of *eternity* ; which, with God, is all *one day*, without any *yesterday* or *to-morrow*,—one permanent day, without

* Isa. xxxiii. 22.

out any succession of parts,—a perpetual *now*, co-existing with every one of man's days. Thus, as the great *Luther* observes, upon this place ; “ If we will “ speak as the thing is,—to day, every day and al-“ ways, the Son of God is begotten : For, in eter-“ nity, there is neither past nor future ; but a perpe-“ tual *to-day*.” And, as he further observes, upon that text ; “ *to-day* is here to be taken for God's “ time, not ours : For God is not there speaking with “ us, but with him who is with God beyond time*.”

Nor is this the only place where *eternity* is represented under the character of a *day*, one day. A text runs in our translation, (by the help of the supplement *was*) ; *before the day was, I am he*†. But the strict and just rendering is, *from the day—I am he* ; from the day of *eternity*, from all *eternity*. And accordingly, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament which was used in our Lord's time,—it is rendered *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, from the beginning*‡.

Upon the whole, it is plain that our Lord's generation, as the Son of God, was not in any day of *time* ; but in the day of *eternity*||.

2. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *Psal. ii. 12. Kiss the Son, lest he be*

* *Polus, in loco.*

† *Isa. xliii. 13.*

‡ *Pol. in loc.*

|| It is a pitiful objection, that, for about three thousand years before David's time,---the characters of *Father* and *Son*, in the holy Trinity, were not revealed. The infinite **ONE** was the proper judge, how revelation should gradually proceed ; and it should be enough to us, that this mystery is revealed,---was so, even in the Jewish church.

be angry.—These words enjoin a most important duty toward *the Son*; the same glorious Person, whose generation is represented in the seventh verse of this Psalm. And upon whom was the duty enjoined? Was it only upon *kings, and judges of the earth*, who should live in gospel-times; so as it should be made no account of by any person, for hundreds of years after David's time? The text would then necessarily bear this shocking paraphrase, as if David had said: *Ye kings and judges, who shall live in the Gentile-churches above a thousand years after my time, KISS, pay homage,—to one who shall be then become THE SON; though as to what he presently is, or whether he presently be at all—I have nothing presently to say.*

That base abuse of the words cannot be evaded, but by taking them in their plain sense; as containing a prescription of *then present* duty, to persons *then* in being,—while also of a continuing respect to persons through all succeeding generations.

The words were applicable to the case of all*, in David's time, who in any measure enjoyed the revelation then made of the great **MESSIAH**; even to some kings and judges then around Judea, who were not utter strangers, however much enemies, to that revelation: But they were more particularly applicable to all the judges and people in David's kingdom,—and likeways to

* Though the call is expressly given, only to *kings and judges of the earth*; it equally belongs to persons of other denominations,---even to all whose duty it is, as in the close of the verse, to *put their trust in him*.

to all the kings and judges and people of following generations, in Israel and Judah ; though having a principal respect to those who were to exist under the gospel-dispensation.

And as the words contain an enjoiment of *then present* duty, upon persons *then* in being ; it could not but be toward one who *then was THE SON*,—and therefore such from everlasting.

3. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *Psal. xlv. 6. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever* : Compared with *Heb. i. 8. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*.

God the Father was there introduced, as speaking to God the Messiah ; and speaking to him of what *then* was the case, of a *throne* which he then had : For he was *then* sitting upon a throne, in the Jewish church and nation ; as the Scripture most expressly testifieth*.—But the Apostle is positive, that what was then said, was said to *the Son* ; and therefore to him who *then* was *the Son*, as having ever been so. For it is quite unsufferable to pretend,—that though these words, as applied by the Apostle, were become *true* in his time ; yet they would have been *false* in David's time, if then applied in the same manner,—to one who was not *then THE SON*, who then had no existence as such.

4. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *Prov. viii. 24, 25. When there*

* Isa. vi. 1. John xii. 41.

there were no depths, I was brought forth:—Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was I brought forth.

It is a striking instance of what lengths one may be led to go, for serving the purpose of error; when presuming to explain away these verses, and that whole chapter,—from any application to the second Person of the adorable Trinity. The party speaking is *wisdom*; and, as one observes*,—“none in the ‘antient church, no not the *Arians* themselves, did ‘ever question, that by *wisdom* here is understood *the Son of God*.’” Nor has it ever been questioned by any till now, but upon *Socinian* principles.

The term *wisdom*, applied to God, is naturally the character of an attribute; yet is frequently in the book of Proverbs, as elsewhere in Scripture†, determined by the context to a metaphorical sense,—as the character of a person‡. And *wisdom*, as speaking in the two verses now quoted, is most evidently determined by the context to a metaphorical sense, as the character of a person; of none other than the second Person of the eternal Trinity.

Could it be said, concerning God’s attribute of *wisdom*,—that it *was brought forth before the mountains were settled, set up from everlasting*? Could it be said, that this *attribute of God was by him, as one brought up*

* *Wilheart’s Theologia*, p. 748. † *Luke xi. 49. Matth. xxiii. 34.*

‡ Where *Wisdom* is mentioned, in the 5th and 14th verses of this chapter, there are two different words for it in the original; both different from that used for *Wisdom* in the 1st and 12th verses.

up with him? Could the attribute of *wisdom* be properly brought in saying,—*I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.* When all this, if meant of an attribute, would have properly belonged to the attribute of *Grace*? The same wisdom is brought in (chap. i. 23.) saying,—*Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my spirit unto you:* And must we understand this as meaning the reproof of an attribute, the spirit of an attribute! A turning away of these passages from a proper application to Christ as the *personal wisdom of God*, is a most violent wresting of them; even a turning of them into absurdity and nonsense*.

And this personal *wisdom* says, *I was brought forth*; that he was so before this world had a being, from all eternity. Nor can any rational sense be put upon this, but as denoting an *Eternal Generation*; directly ascribed to Christ, the personal *wisdom* of God: The word being the very same in the original which David

* The opposition made, in the book afore-mentioned, to an understanding of this chapter with any reference to Christ,---sinks even into base futility; as if it could not be meant of *HIM*, because the Hebrew word for *Wisdom* is of the *feminine* gender,---representing wisdom as a *female*. According to this way of criticising, the word *Person* (in Heb. i. 3.) could not be understood of *God*; because the Greek word so rendered is of the *feminine* gender! And by the *Church*, in the New Testament, we must always understand a mere collection of *women*; because the Greek word *so* rendered is of the *feminine* gender!

vid used (Psal. li. 5.), for expressing his own *Generation*; when he confessed, that he was *shapen in iniquity*.

5. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *Prov. xxx. 4.* *Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?*

There is another instance, of the desperate shifts that one may be driven to for supporting error; in an attempt of explaining away this whole passage from any application to God.—And what then is the sense put upon it? It is just taken for a defiance given to some person by the Holy Spirit, to tell the name of the mere man, or (if he were dead) of that man's son, who had done the great things mentioned in these words. But this is to bring in the Holy Spirit as bidding defiance to a fiction, as fighting with a shadow: For none had ever pretended, that any mere man had ever done these things; such an absurd and blasphemous imagination—had never entered into the mind of man or devil.

The eternal God had, in a figurative sense, both *descended* and *ascended**: To him belonged the absolute disposal of *wind* and *waters*; he had *established all the ends of the earth*.—Agur, in the preceding verse, had made a humble profession of his ignorance of the *Holy*; of that *holy One*: And, in this verse, he

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* *Exod. xix. 18. xxxiv. 5. Gen. xvii. 22. xxxv. 13.*

charges ignorance of him upon all,—upon every one; *canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection* * ?

Now this *holy One*, the *God* expressly mentioned in the next words,—is said to have then had a *Son*; a *Son* when he established all the ends of the earth, and so from everlasting: Whose *Sonship*, whose name as such, was of most incomprehensible glory †.

6. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *Micah v. 2.* *But thou Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be Ruler in Israel: Whose goings forth have been from of old, from Everlasting.*

These words were an illustrious prophesy about Christ; as expressly applied to him, in the New Testament ‡. A temporal and future *coming forth* was there ascribed to him; a generation in time as man, to be born in *Beth-lehem*. But he had likeways ascribed to him a *going forth from of old, from Everlasting*. And, as there was no external manifestation or operation of God from everlasting; these words can bear no other sense than that of his *Eternal Generation*,—no other *going forth* can be imagined, as competent to him from everlasting. The *coming forth* unquestionably denoted one sort of generation, which was to belong to him as man: And the *going forth* could only denote another sort of generation; which had belonged to him, as the second Person of the divine Trinity, from everlasting.

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* Job xi. 7. † Judges xiii. 18. ‡ Matth. ii. 6.

It can be no just objection, against this sense of the words,—that *goings forth* are mentioned, in the plural number. This manner of expression serves to represent the incomprehensible perfection and excellency of his *Eternal Generation*. But it is no way inconsistent with the *unity* of that *generation*, the real *unity* of his *going forth*: more than the mention of the *multitude* of God's *mercies* *, and of his *Seven Spirits* †,—can be inconsistent with the *unity* of his *mercy*, and of the *Holy Spirit*; while properly serving to denote the incomprehensible fulness and glory of both.

7. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *John v. 18*. *Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath; but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God*: Compared with *John x. 33, 36*. *For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God*:—*Say ye,—thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God*.

We find here, that the Jews sought to kill Jesus for *blasphemy*. Wherein did the pretended blasphemy lye? It lay in his *making himself equal with God, making himself God*. And upon what ground did they reckon that he had made himself such, or claimed his being such? It was wholly upon this ground; that he *said, that God was his Father*,—that he *said, I am the Son of God*.

Now,

* *Psal. li. 1.*

† *Rev. iv. 5. v. 6.*

Now, it is perfectly evident,—that Jesus sustained the construction which they so put upon what he had said, as perfectly just: For the whole defence which he made—proceeded upon the acknowledged truth of that construction.

But it is grossly absurd, to imagine,—that it could ever have entered into any one of their minds, to put such a construction upon his calling *God his Father*, and calling himself *the Son of God*; if it had been understood, of his having *become* the Son of God,—only about thirty-three years before. Never one of them imagined, concerning the claim of any sort of *temporal Sonship* to God,—that it was the same as a claim of *equality with God*, a claim of *being God*. They allowed a claim of some such *Sonship* to angels *, to the first man †, to many other men ‡, to themselves ||; without ever pretending or dreading, that there was any blasphemy in the matter.

They knew that there could be but *one God*; and that therefore a being *equal with God* was the same as *being God*: They knew, from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the doctrine of a *Sonship* in the Godhead: And they knew, from these Scriptures,—that the *divine Son*, to be manifested in flesh, was the divine Saviour or Messiah promised unto them. What therefore they charged upon Jesus as blasphemy, was plainly this; That he gave himself out as being the *Son of God*,—

* Job xxxviii. 7. † Luke iii. 38. ‡ Gen. vi. 2. || Hof. i. 10.

God,—in the sense which was peculiar to the promised Messiah, whom they would not allow him to be.

The just construction which they put upon his words, could thus have no consistent sense; but when understood of him as the *Son of God* in the *same nature*, by a Sonship inseparable from Godhead,—and therefore as the Son of God from Everlasting.

8. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *John x. 30. I and my Father are one*. There our Lord evidently spoke of himself as the *Son*, when speaking of God as the *Father*; affirming that he the *Son*, under the character of *Sonship*, was *one* with the *Father*,—*one* with him in nature or essence. But his humanity was not, could not be taken *into* the divine nature or essence, to an oneness in Godhead; though wonderfully united *unto* his divine Person. He had therefore a character of *Sonship*, abstracting from his humanity,—in which he was *one* with the *Father*, the same one God; and must have ever been so, in that character.

9. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *1 John iv. 9, 10, 14. God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him:—Sent his Son, to be the propitiation for our sins:—The Father sent the Son, to be the Saviour of the world*.

One may as well make any thing of Scripture, abusing it to serve every purpose,—as to pretend that the *Son*, here mentioned as sent, is mentioned as *made the Son*, in his *being sent*; or that the *sending* of the

Son

Son did effectuate his *Generation* as the **Son**. *The Father sent the Son, his Son, his only begotten Son*: And this language, unless it be reduced to an uncertain sound, by explaining it inconsistently with any natural use of language, must mean,—that the characters of *Father* and *Son* existed before the sending; that, as already bearing these characters, the *one* did *send*, and the *other* was *sent*; that therefore the *Son*, who was sent, was such before he was sent,—the only begotten *Son from everlasting*.

An argument of the same nature, lies in *Heb. i. 1, 2.* *God hath spoken unto us by his Son,—by whom also he made the worlds.* It would be an outrage upon these words, as a flat contradiction to them; to deny that he was the *Son* when this visible world was made by him,—or till about four thousand years afterwards! By the *Son*, the *Father* made the worlds; by him who was the *Son* before all worlds.

10. That Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by *Eternal Generation*, appears from *1 John v. 7.* *There are three that bear record in Heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: And these three are One.*

These words contain the most eminent display of the mystery of the glorious Trinity. The *second Person* indeed is not here called the *Son*; but the *Word*, the *Personal Word*. Yet, of necessity, he must be here understood as the *Son*, as the *second Person* under that character: For this is the only imaginable reason, why the *first Person* is called the *Father*. And so, without allowing the character of *Son* to have a place in

in the Trinity, as much as the character of *Father*,—and without allowing both these personal characters to be as ancient as the Trinity of Persons in the God-head; all consistent sense of these precious words must be abolished.—So much for the proof of the *Eternal Generation**.

2dly, We may now make some general Remarks upon this subject. And,

1. The Eternal Generation of the Son of God is altogether *inconceivable* by us, as to the *manner* of it.—As well may the smallest vessel contain the ocean, as a finite mind may comprehend this infinite mystery. The doctrine thereof is wholly a matter of faith, *that* it is; noway a matter of reason, as to *how* it is. We cannot comprehend the manner, even of human generation: Nor of a metaphorical generation in our own minds; though yet nothing is more common, than for persons to call thinking *conceiving*,—and thoughts *conceptions*. Far less can the depth of the mystery we are speaking of be fathomed, by the longest line of a finite understanding. It is blasphemous

to

* It is really astonishing,---that the author of the afore-mentioned book could satisfy himself with so short and slight work as he makes, for dispatching the Scripture proofs of the *Eternal Generation*. Could he think that he had really answered them; by a few coarse touches of shifting or perverting them? Could he suppose, that the friends of this doctrine might be so easily driven out of these strong holds, puffed out of them like fools? Or is it enough, ----if an ignorant or heedless reader should take bold assertions for arguments?

to object against it on the ground of incomprehensibility; as much as to object against the being and perfections of God, on the same ground. It was well said by one of the antients: “ Forbear to examine “ narrowly how God the Father begat the Son, or to “ launch forth curiously into this hidden depth; lest, “ by much gazing upon the brightness of that inacces- “ sible light, you lose that little sight which of God’s “ free gift is granted to poor mortals* ! ” The finite mind can have no proper conception, but of finite things; and therefore must lose itself, when presuming to fathom what is infinite.

2. The Eternal Generation is not to be conceived of or measured, according to any notion of *generation among men*.—So faint is the allusion from the one to the other, so infinitely distant are they; that the manner of the former can never be brought down to the test of the latter. It is even quite absurd to imagine,—that the way of a spirit, especially of the infinite and Eternal Spirit, can be properly measured and tried by any standard of flesh and blood. And every attempt of this sort, with regard to the mystery we are considering, is a blasphemous degrading of it; as much as a bringing down the divine perfections, for being severally adjusted to any corresponding shadows of them among creatures.

3. The Eternal Generation, though incomprehensible by creatures, is yet the most *proper* and *perfect* generation. Among men, generation is of a like person;

* *Apropos* Wisheart's Theologia, p. 754.

person ; but never unto an absolutely perfect likeness : whereas the eternal Son of God is *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person**. And generation among men—is of another person only in a *like* nature : whereas the generation we are speaking of—is of another person in the very *same* nature ; so that it must be infinitely more proper and perfect.

4. The Eternal Generation of the Son, so proper and perfect, doth not mean his deriving of *Godhead* from the Father. It only means a deriving of *Personality* from him, in the same Godhead. And thus, though the second Person is not the *Son* of himself,—yet he is *God* of himself, equally with the *Father*.

5. The Eternal Generation is *natural* and *necessary*.—It was no way arbitrary, or from the Father's will ; but naturally of the same original and eternal necessity, with the existence of the Godhead.

6. The Eternal Generation of the Son—means no *Inequality* of him to the Father : It doth not mean any priority of the Father, as to Being or dignity ; but only as to order of subsistence.

7. The Eternal Generation of the Son is such, as could become a matter of promise.—So it is in Scripture : *I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth*† ; *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son*‡. But this did no way signify his beginning in time to be such ; it only respected a glorious manifestation in time, of his being such : As, in Scripture,—a thing is said to be made, when eminent.

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* Heb. i. 3. † Psal. lxxxix. 27. ‡ Heb. i. 5.

ly manifested to be. So was Jesus, in and after his resurrection, *made both Lord and Christ**; gloriously revealed then in these characters, while he had born them as really before.—And his being *called the Son of God*, upon his incarnation†, was a thing altogether different from his beginning then to be so.

II. We may consider the Exercise of faith here meant. And,

1st, Believing on the Son of God, imports a believing *that he is the Son of God*: That he is so, according to the Scripture doctrine of his Sonship,—by a most mysterious and incomprehensible generation from all eternity; in which he is equal with God the Father, in the very same nature,—the same one God. How monstrous would it be to imagine, that our Lord's question to the man whose eyes he had opened was only as if he had said;—Dost thou believe that I became the Son of God about thirty-three years ago; without considering or knowing or enquiring what I was before,—or whether I was before at all?

At the first interview which *Nathaniel* had with *JESUS*, he said; *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel*†. And upon what evidence did Nathaniel thus profess the faith of his being *the Son of God*? At Nathaniel's approach, Jesus immediately spoke of him as one whom he was intimately acquainted with; *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile*.

* Acts ii. 36.

† Luke i. 35.

‡ John i. 49.

guile. Nathaniel was greatly surprised, as there had been formerly no sort of natural acquaintance betwixt them ; and *saith unto him, whence knowest thou me ?* *Jesus answered and said unto him ; Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* This could not but increase Nathaniel's surprise ; as he appears to have been in a religious retirement which he was sure no mere man knew of, sure that no mere man saw him there. He was therefore struck with an evidence of the Godhead of Jesus, as appearing in his divine omniscience ; and instantly perceived the glory of his Sonship, as shining in the glory of his Godhead.—It is thus that we are to believe his being the Son of God ; by a Sonship essential to the divinity of his person.

2dly, Believing on the Son of God, imports a believing that he is such *in our nature* ; even *God manifested in the flesh* *.—He now appeared to the man whose eyes he had opened, in the common nature of man ; commonly known by the name *Jesus*. This man knew him to be so, in the truth of manhood ; before knowing him to be the Son of God : As he had said to his neighbours † ;—*A Man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, go to the pool of Siloam and wash ; and I went and washed, and I received sight.*

We are therefore to believe on him as **IMMANUEL**, *God with us* in our nature : A kinsman-redeemer, as man ; an all-sufficient Redeemer, as God-man : Who could

* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

† John ix. 11.

could not have served and suffered, without becoming man ; who could not have done so perfectly, and for us,—without being also God, the Son of God.

3dly, Believing on the Son of God, imports a believing him to be such in our nature as *the Mediator of the new Covenant**.—He could not become man in a private capacity, or otherways than as a Covenant-head ; *the second Man, the Lord from Heaven*† ; of whom the first man was, in this respect, *the figure*‡. The faith meant in our text—doth therefore comprehend a believing the Scripture-doctrine of Christ's Mediatory offices; as our Prophet, Priest, and King : The doctrine of his execution of these offices; in his estates of both humiliation and exaltation : The whole doctrine of the covenant of grace; and of all salvation through him, according to that covenant.

4thly, Believing on the Son of God, denotes a particular and full Dependence upon him in the whole matter of our salvation.—We are thus to take up the Rest of our souls in him; as our *Rock*, our *Salvation*, our *Defence*, a *Refuge for us*||. We are to rest on him by faith as our High-priest, our peace; and so, as our Prophet and our King. Particularly, we are to rest on his all-sufficient righteousness for justification : In appropriating it to ourselves by faith; receiving it, upon the free offer of the gospel, to its becoming and being ours; by believing, on this ground, that it is ours,—so as to believe pardon and acceptance and eternal

* Heb. xii. 24. † 1 Cor. xv. 47. ‡ Rom. v. 14.

|| Psal. lxxii. 2, 6, 7, 8.

ternal life through it, as all ours: Renouncing all dependence before God, on any self-righteousness whatsoever.

5thly, Believing on the Son of God, is unto a making him the immediate Object of our religious *Homage*; as the man whom our Lord was now dealing with immediately said, upon the gracious discovery made to him,—*Lord, I believe: And he worshipped him.*

When there is a submitting, by faith, to his Righteousness; there will also be a submitting to his Rule,—taking him for *our Judge, our Lawgiver, our King* *. He is to be the immediate Object of our worship; and of all our obedience, according to the whole extent of the moral law: Dealing with that law in the dispensation which he makes of it to us, as a law which he has fulfilled in its covenant-form; and so performing all duties from a principle of love, in the way of resting upon his fulfilment of the law,—as the only ground of our acceptance with God, and of our title to all the blessings of eternal life.

III. We may improve the subject, in some Inferences. And,

1st, We may here see—the gross error of teaching, That Jesus Christ became the Son of God only in time; or by a generation, not from all eternity, but only in time.

The Christian Church, all along hitherto, has uniformly maintained the doctrine of the *Eternal Generation*. Several persons, indeed, have risen up in opposition

* Isa. xxxiii. 22.

sition to this doctrine : Some pretending, that our Lord derived his character of Sonship from the miraculous formation of his human nature ; some, that he derived it from his consecration in human nature to the Mediatory office ; and some, that he derived it from his miraculous resurrection by the Divine power. But a new Heresy has broken forth on this head, very lately : In a Book concerning the *true Sonship of Christ*, which has become a subject of some speculation and controversy in this country-side ; being a Book which is commonly known to have been composed, and published last year,—by a Clergyman within a few miles of this place.

The peculiar doctrine of this Book, is,—That JESUS CHRIST, having been from all Eternity *the Word of God*, or the *Logos* (as called in Greek), did *in Time* become the *Son of God* ; by a concurrence of the first Person of the Trinity with the Virgin Mary, as two conjunct Parents,—for uniting the personal *Word* to human nature, as an additional substance, in the Virgin's womb : So that the Generation of the Son of God is said to lie, in what is called the *Union* of the two natures into one complex person ; as jointly contributed unto by these two Parents. Thus, he is allowed to be the Son of God no otherways than as he also, at the same time, and jointly, is the Son of Mary ; the Son of neither, but

as

as bearing a filial relation conjunctly and indi-
visibly, to both these Parents*. A *humanizing*
our Lord's relation of Sonship to God the Father, was
long ago mentioned as a gross error to be guarded a-
gainst; But, by the above doctrine, that relation is
humanized with a witness; in such a manner as no
mortal ever presumed upon till now.

This doctrine is a *Heresy*, in the highest sense of the
word; being an error subverting the very foundation
of Christianity, as hitherto held in all Christian churches:
While it is likeways a *Heresy quite new*; such as was
never heard of in the world, till by the Book referred
to. And it may be seasonable, as an *Antidote* against
such *Poison*,—that we shew this doctrine to be abso-
lutely *false*, of a most *pernicious nature* and *tendency*;
and without any proper *apology* for it, in what truths
the Book otherways contains to the honour of Christ.

1. The above new doctrine is absolutely *false*.
This is evident from the arguments by which we have
proved the Eternal Generation or Sonship of Jesus
Christ; and which need not be repeated. It only re-
mains here, that we shew the utter vanity of these ar-
guments by which the new doctrine is supported.

(1.) One argument is,—that the title *Son of God* is al-
ways in Scripture ascribed to him *who is God-man*;
yea, ascribed to him *as he is God-man*. And this, in-
deed, is readily granted; that the character *Son of*
God, is transferred to the whole mediatory person *God-*
man: Yea, that it belongs to him considered *as God-*

man;

* P. 53, 54, 67.

man; or, not as excluding, but as including the consideration of his manhood. For he assumed human nature into so wonderful an union with his divine person, into such unity of person,—that though it admits of a distinct, yet never of a divided or separated consideration from his divine Person: Such is the *Oneness*, —that whatever belongs distinctly to either of his natures, is ascribed to the whole person God-man as such; while the glory of his Eternal Sonship shines forth indivisibly, in and through his manhood. After all, it is a sufficient answer to the pretended argument; that there is not one syllable in all the Scriptures which even appears to mean,—that the character *Son of God* belongs to him *because he is God-man*, or on account of his being so: And unless this were proved, nothing at all is proved to the purpose of the new doctrine*.

(2.) Another

* That Christ is the *Son of God as he is God-man*, and that he is the *Son of God because he is God-man*,—are two things extremely different. The difference is as in another case, that Christ is to be worshipped *as he is Mediator*; or without excluding the consideration of his mediatory capacity, but as including it;—for, while there is no higher worship than faith, he is the object of faith formally in all and each of his mediatory offices as such: But this is absolutely different from saying, that he is to be worshipped *because he is Mediator*; as if his title to worship were founded in his mediation, and not in his Godhead.

It may not, perhaps, be quite easy, to restrain one's indignation; at being entertained through a great part of the book, with a pompous reasoning for what no Christian, understanding what he says,

(2.) Another argument is taken from the Inconceivable-ness, or pretended absurdity of Eternal Generation,—or of generation without two parents*. But are we to reject Scripture-mysteries, because they transcend our comprehension? Then farewell to all supernatural revelation; farewell to faith, as what must yield all its place to reason.—It is the very foundation-stone of the fabrick of the Socinian Heresy, as first laid by *Socinus* and his followers; that every

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says, will deny,--- *That Christ is the Son of God as he is God-man:* And to have the proof of this palmed upon the world, as if it were a demonstrative and unanswerable proof of the new doctrine about Christ's *temporal Sonship*; while its being so given out, is a mere sophistical imposition upon the reader's understanding.

The first manifestation that ever was made of Christ, in the first promise, respected him in his mediatory capacity,---as he was to appear in human nature: And every thing that was afterwards said of him, in the progress of divine revelation, respected him in the same character; there is not a syllable about him in all the Bible, as the second Person of the Trinity,---considered abstractly from, and exclusive of his mediatory character and person. Particularly, there is not any one proof of his Godhead in Scripture,---but such as proves the Godhead of the Mediator, God-man; not a single proof of his Divinity, but what proves his Godhead *as he is God-man*,---seeing the Scripture makes no revelation of any thing belonging to him, but as belonging (though not all to his mediation, yet) to him in his mediatory capacity. And fine reasoning it would be, to infer from all this; That no Godhead belongs to him but *because he is God-man*, some Socinian Godhead arising from his miraculous incarnation. Yet as good reasoning would that blasphemy be, as the inference now made from Christ's being the Son of God *as God-man*; that therefore he became the Son of God, only in his Incarnation.

* P. 32, 67.

thing in Scripture, which seems to exceed the limits of our comprehension, must be explained down to a sense which falls within our comprehension,—and every other sense of it rejected.

(3.) The principal argument, which is, upon the matter, the *ALL* of the book,—is taken from a new doctrine about the manner of *Human Generation*: which is called the *essential criterion or touch-stone* of the Generation of the Son of God*. And we are taught, that there is nothing more inconceivable in his generation than in our generation; yea, that his generation seems more easily conceivable than ours†: That his generation is to be understood, only in a conformity to the manner of human generation‡: And that his generation in time, as the Son of God, according to this manner of human generation,—is “the fundamental article of revealed Religion||.”

And what is this manner of human generation, to which the generation of the Son of God is said to agree; and by which our conceptions of his generation must be so regulated? It is a notion called *Animalcular Generation*: A particular explaining of which, as it is quite needless at this time,—would be extremely improper and indecent, in this place.

But we may observe, in general,—that this doctrine about the manner of human generation, is most audaciously imposed upon readers; as “the acknowledged Theory of Generation §.” Yet by whom is

* P. 28, 29, 52. † P. 100. ‡ P. 53, 54. || P. 79, 84. § P. 27.

is it acknowledged? and how long has it been known?—It was brought forth by a Dutchman called *Antony Leeuwenhoek*, as begotten by him upon some microscopical reveries; in the days of some persons yet alive. It became fashionable for a time, prevailing over the old theory, among some new-fashioned philosophers: But has now gone much out of fashion; giving place to two newer theories brought into the room of it, one after another, by two Frenchmen*. And no wonder: For, taken in its whole complexion,—it is such a delirious notion, as is fit for no entertainment but among lunatics or in a mad-house. And yet this new ridiculous fiction is now produced with the greatest assurance, for a principal place in the foundation of the Christian Religion. What a sin, what a shame is it,—that the faith and salvation of Christians should be brought over, to rest on such a carnal reverie!

2. The above new doctrine is of a most *pernicious* nature and *tendency*. The Dutchman's fancy, about the manner of human generation,—was, in itself, a piece of very harmless stuff; tending to nothing worse, than some whimsical amusement at an idle hour. But the matter turns out far otherways; when this same fancy has become, in the brain of the Author of the book referred to, and according to his style,—the *original* and *originating principle* of the heresy under consideration. For,

(1.) This new heresy is grossly subversive of the Scripture-doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*.—It allows of

* *Buffon* and *Maupertuis*.

of no distinguishing, no personal character or name, in all the Bible, as belonging to the first Person of the Trinity ; till he acquired the name of *Father*, at Christ's incarnation : And if there is no personal relation of *Father* and *Son*, in the Trinity as such ; there can be no reason why the one should be called *first*, more than the other,—previous to the incarnation.

The only character or name in all the Bible, which is allowed to have belonged to the *second* Person as such, before incarnation,—is the name *word*, in Greek *logos*. And though this term, when applied to Christ in Scripture,—is determined by the context to be a personal character, the name of a person ; yet, in itself, it is no personal character, no name of a person, —more than the term *wisdom* is so in itself, or otherwise than as determined by the context to be so : While the term *Son*, as used in its natural and proper sense,—is, in itself, the character or name of a person ; and of a personal relation to another person as a *Father*. Moreover, this character, *the Word of God*,—is, in itself, a character of relation only to *Godhead* ; but not of a *personal* relation to Godhead : Far less is it, in itself, a character of *personal* relation, or of any relation at all,—to a *first person* in the Godhead *.

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* The term *Spirit* or *Ghost*,----is not, in itself, a personal character ; but is often determined by the context to be so, especially by the additional epithet *Holy* : And it is determined to be a character of personal relation, not merely to Godhead, but to the other two Persons in the Godhead ; as the character of a person proceeding from both.

The characters, *First* and *Second* and *Third Persons*,—are no intrinsic characters of any personal properties, of any personal distinctions or relations, in the adorable Trinity ; but are merely extrinsic, arithmetical denominations.

Thus, according to the Heresy we are speaking of, —all distinction of any personal characters, in any personal properties and relations, is banished out of the Holy Trinity. Each of the Persons is said to be of the *same self-existence*, of *equal self-existence*,—in respect of *personality*, as well as of *essence* or *nature* * : Which must mean,—that all the persons are equally underived ; and mutually unconnected with, mutually unrelated to each other, as to *personality*,—only meeting in one *Essence*.

But if all distinction of personal characters, in personal properties and relations, be cast out of the Trinity ; no room is left, for conceiving of any personal distinction at all among three divine Persons in one *Essence*. Thus, all personal distinction in the Trinity must be lost,—a Trinity of persons given up with ; or it must land in the distinction of three divine Beings, *three Gods*.

As a well known author observes † : “ The Sonship of Christ as a divine Person, and as by Generation, even eternal Generation,—is the distinguishing criterion of the Christian religion, and what gives it the preference to all others, and upon which all the important

* p. 40, 50.

† Dr Gill's *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, vol. 1. p. 241.

“ important doctrines of it depend. Without this,
 “ the doctrine of the Trinity can never be supported ;
 “ —without this, the distinction of persons in the Tri-
 “ nity can never be maintained ; and, indeed, without
 “ this there is none at all ; take away this, and all dis-
 “ tinction ceases ;—*it is all over, with the doctrine of*
 “ *the Trinity.*”

It is true, that the author of the scheme which we are speaking of—maintains the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in unity of Godhead ; but his scheme cannot consist with this. And no new Heresy was ever pushed, at first, into all its native and necessary consequences : These have always come in to the improvements afterwards made upon it ; especially by such as adopted it, and accommodated it to their own purposes.

(2.) This new Heresy, according to the manner in which it is maintained,—doth cast a grievous, yea, a blasphemous reproach, upon the Scripture-doctrine of the *Eternal Generation*. This received doctrine, and so the common faith of Christians on that head, is horribly calumniated ; as if it meant to “ deprive our “ Saviour of some of the noblest characters of divinity, “ —necessary-existence, self-existence, and absolute “ eternity :” As if it meant, that he is “ not an original and self-existent, necessarily-existent Deity ;” but “ a generated, derived, dependent Divinity,—a generated, a begotten God * ;”—that is, a false God ; no God at all. It is chiefly, almost wholly, by this dreadful

* P. 30, 40, 41, 44. 51, 83, 191.

dreadful traducing of the doctrine of *Eternal Generation*,—that the field is cleared, for the doctrine of *temporal Generation* to make its appearance. And if such a representation of matters were just,—horrible has always been, and still is, the case of all Christian Churches ; living in damnable error about the Object of their faith and worship : Living in gross idolatry ; while worshipping one as God, who, according to their own principles, is no true God but an idol *.

Yet, as we formerly observed ; the doctrine of the *Eternal Generation* does not at all mean the Son's deriving Godhead, but only deriving *Personality* from the Father,—by the same eternal necessity which belongs to the divine existence : And that thus, though he is not *the Son of himself* but of the Father, yet he is *God of himself* ;

* The Author makes no bones of charging the Christian Church (p. 30, 31.), with having fallen universally into this mire,---soon after the days of the Apostles ; and with having wallowed in it, all along to this time : All the Churches of the Reformation, notwithstanding all their reformation otherways, continuing still in the same dreadful condition ; as adherents “ to the doctrines of “ the Popish schoolmen, in this article.” But he boldly pretends (p. 80, 81.), as what keeps him in good countenance ; that the Apostles and all Christians in their time, “ The primitive Christian and Apostolic Church,”---were of his principles, about the *Sonship* of Christ. Prodigious ! Would he have the world to believe that their principles, in this matter, were built upon what he calls “ the just Theory of Generation,” the *Animalcular System* ; though such a theory was not then imagined by any mortal, nor till about sixteen hundred years after their time !

himself; of the same necessarily-existent, self-existent, underived, independent, and absolutely Eternal God-head,—with God the Father*.

If any shall ask, how can these things be? How can there be an Eternal Generation in the God-head; or how can derived Personality consist with an underived Godhead of the Person?—It is answered, without a blush, That we cannot tell: We have the most perfect evidence of Divine testimony *that* these things are so; but *how* they are, or can be so; we know not: And no wonder, when the very wind which is blowing upon us exceeds our comprehension; we *cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*†. It is an insult upon that glorious mystery, as well as upon the finite state of human understanding, to bid us explain and account for the manner *how* it is; as much as to put us upon the same task, with respect to the distinct subsistences of three different Persons in the same numerical substance or essence.—A man of tolerable modesty, with a proper regard to his Bible, will not pretend to explain the manner of human generation; in a flat contradiction to this verdict of the Holy Ghost,—*Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her*

that

* This is the common faith of Christians: While it would be disingenuous and unmanly, to catch at an advantage from any unguarded or loose expressions which have been used by some in teaching that doctrine,—without any just foundation in the doctrine itself.

† John iii. 8.

*that is with child** : Much less will he pretend to fathom the infinite mystery of the Divine Generation.

3. It can be no proper apology for the indignity done to the Lord Christ, by the new heresy in the book referred to ; that a great part of this book is taken up in celebrating his “ personal excellence and dignity,” his “ great and important offices,” and “ the high honours and rewards” to which he is exalted. All this is done, indeed ; but how ? In high ranting strains of unscriptural and undeterminate language ; with a mixture of new, loose, inconsistent, suspicious, yea erroneous notions. And of these, we may mention three instances.

(1.) It is taught, that Jesus Christ has not only assumed *human nature* into an union with his divine person ; but has, in the constitution of his mediatory person, “ assumed creation (every species of created being) into union with its Creator ;—giving himself into personal union with his creation, and taking creation into personal union with himself †.” And so the whole creation must be a part of his Mediatory Person ! In the constitution of his person,—he must not only be **IMMANUEL**, *God-with-us* men ; but also (among other creatures) *God-with-beasts*, even with the mire of the streets !

(2.) It is taught, that,—“ under his visible and gracious administration, as Lord and Governor of the universe, all evil shall be extirpated from the empire of God ; and righteousness and peace and happiness universally and for ever prevail †.” And this, if it

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have

• Eccl. xi. 5.

† P. 120, 147, 185.

‡ P. 148.

have any sense, must mean,—that, at length, there will be neither sin nor devil nor damned spirit nor hell, in all God's universe ; but all will be universally restored for ever.—Some hints, indeed, are given elsewhere in the book, of a hell in the eternal state : Yet such things cannot possibly be reconciled, but by supposing this hell to be without the limits of God's empire,—beyond the verge of creation !

(3.) It is taught, that “ a spiritual or moral conformity to the Son of God by his word and Spirit, “ in those who are capable of it, and by his Spirit alone “ in those who are incapable or destitute of the influence of his word,—is the first part of our salvation, and the natural and just foundation of all its other benefits : This applies to persons of every age, and under every dispensation *.” Here the Author's principles are plain ; that heathens, destitute of the word, are yet capable of conformity to Christ and salvation through him : And that sanctification (a spiritual or moral conformity to him) is the ground-work of salvation ; even the foundation upon which justification, and a title to eternal life, do naturally and justly proceed.—According to the Bible-christianity, sanctification is the result, not the reason of our justification,—as this is wholly upon the ground of Christ's righteousness : And sanctification belongs not to the foundation, but to the finishing of salvation-work ; while all the mystery of Christ's Priesthood, for our deliverance from a state of condemnation,

damnation,—is subservient to the great and final purpose of sanctification. But it is fit, when one would bring in a new Christ, to bring in a new Christianity too *.

In a word, all the gospel truths which the Author teaches, all his true doctrines about the excellence and dignity of Jesus Christ,—are most shamefully debased, by the place which they have in that Book ;
being

* The Book referred to deals very high, in a new-modelling of Christianity. Particularly,---the *three* Mediatory Offices of Christ, hitherto acknowledged as exhausting his mediatory capacity, are all jumbled into *one* : And other three offices are added ; which (so far as truth and sense are brought forth in the account given of them), even an ordinary measure of natural logic would consider,---as all properly comprehended in his kingly Office. And, beside various other vague or nonsensical or erroneous notions ; a great part of the harangue, if it aim at any thing,---aims, however inconsistently, at a Theory of *Universal Restoration* by Jesus Christ.

At the same time,---as to the way of celebrating his excellence and dignity, his offices, his honours and rewards, with the duties we owe to him ; all this is done in a style of such bombast and fustian, as must be very disgusting to every person who relishes the simplicity of the Gospel.---Nor can all these high celebrations make any amends, for robbing Jesus Christ of the glory of his *Eternal Sonship*.

What things are taught, about the excellence and dignity and offices and honours and rewards and duties which belong to Christ, ---are all imposed upon the reader, as the proper result of the Author's scheme of *temporal generation*. And how ? By a most false pretence, as if this scheme only could salve the doctrine of Christ's supreme Godhead ; a doctrine pretended to be otherways lost among Christians : While yet this new scheme, in its true import and native consequences,---will leave him neither *Sonship* nor *Godhead*, such as are revealed in the holy Scriptures.

being all defiled in the puddle of his heretical doctrine, as pressed into its service : Which ought to be considered as no better than a robbery committed upon the Gospel ; an extorting of so many garments from it, for adorning a new and pernicious Heresy.

Let us now proceed to some other Inferences. As, 2dly, We may here see—the special nature of true saving Faith. It is not only a believing *of* Christ, receiving his testimony as a Prophet ; but it is also a believing *on him*,—a resting on him alone for salvation, in all his Mediatory Offices : It is a confident trust in him, for the benefit of all these Offices ; making sure account of our enjoying the same, unto eternal life.— Such is the Faith which the Holy Spirit supernaturally works, in the souls of those whom he has awakened ; whom he has brought to see their absolute need of salvation, filling them with a deep concern about obtaining it.

3dly, We may here see—the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation. The question is put concerning it in our text, as of absolute and indispensable necessity : For, according to the constitution of the new Covenant, we can have no saving interest in Christ, no benefit of him for salvation,—but through believing on him. And this is our first, our leading duty ; for we can have no right exercise otherways, nor make a right performance of any other duty,—but as all begins in believing on the Son of God, becoming thus the obedience of faith.

4thly, We

4thly, We may here see—matter of Examination. Our Lord was here examining this man, *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?* And he is so examining each of us still. Ye should therefore be examining yourselves, most particularly, upon this great ſubjeſt.—Try your faith in Christ, the truth of your religion; by ſuch evidences as may be ſuggested from the context:—By what experience ye have had of having *ſeen him*; in any ſupernatural and ſpecial manifestation of himſelf to your ſouls: By what experience ye have had of his *talking with you*; ſpeaking in his gracious words, with a ſweet and applying efficacy, into your hearts: By what dependence ye have been exercising upon him, for the whole of his ſalvation; renouncing all rest for your ſouls, but in him alone: And by what homage ye are paying to him, *worſhipping him*; conſtrained by his love to live unto him, in a warfare againſt all ſin.

5thly, We may here see—matter of Exhortation. Let ſuch as have believed on the Son of God, ſtudy to persevere in doing ſo; living by faith. Exercise a habitual dependence upon him, as to all your personal concerns; for time and eternity. Exercise a habitual dependence upon him, as to all the concerns of his cause and interest in the Church,—and in the world: For his maintaining of Gofpel truth, againſt all prevailing errors; and for his restoring the Reformation-interest in all the Churches, with an enlargement of his Kingdom through the world,—on the other ſide of all the terrible things which are now taking place.

And,

And, as to those who have never yet believed on the Son of God,—let them endeavour to do so, without further delay. The question of our text implies a call, a call from himself,—to believe on the Son of God ; and now is your opportunity for doing so, which you cannot promise upon for another moment. Lay your everlasting concerns to heart : As every thing else is but a trifle, compared with the salvation of your souls. Be at pains, in the use of means, for understanding the way of salvation through Christ, according to the Gospel ; as there is no other possible way of it. Pray for supernatural illumination in the knowledge thereof ; by which your hearts will be sweetly reconciled to that way of salvation, and brought to true rest in it.—Pray, each of you, for a spiritual interview with the *Son of God*,—unto a believing on him : Getting this for a matter of your spiritual experience ; *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.*

A P P E N D I X:

C O N C E R N I N G

The Wonderful Theory of ANIMALCULAR
GENERATION; as lately brought in, by
a Clergyman of the Church of *Scotland*, for
the *Proper Ground* of the *Fundamental Ar-*
tic le of the Christian Religion!

THOUGH an explanation of this subject in the foregoing Sermon, would have been extremely improper and indecent; yet there is an evident propriety and fitness, that a brief sketch be made of it in this place,—as a necessary illustration of what is said concerning it in that Discourse.

The Clergyman, whose new doctrine about the *Divine Generation* we have been considering,—gives the following account of *human generation* (p. 11, 26, 27, 31.), as that to which the other is called *analogous*! “ Every human being exists in a living, ani-“ malcular state, previous to its generation: It exists “ in the Father, partaker of his nature and one with “ him in essence, yet distinguished from him by its in-“ dividual subsistence:—Generation properly consists “ in the union of this original living principle, (the “ original

“ original and originating principle of the Son) communicated by the Father as the chief constituent of the future child, with another and an additional substance derived from the mother in conception, forming the complex person procreated of both ; and who, from this generation and participation of the substance of both parents, is, when born into the world, called the son of both :—Generation is the union of a pre-existent, living principle, of the same nature and necessary existence as the father, with an additional substance derived from the mother ; by which a complex person is begotten, possessing the nature of both parents, and taking his filial name from both.—This is the general and acknowledged theory of generation *.”

This is indeed a very *general* account of the Theory, yet not without some *additional substance* which never belonged to it before ; while a more particular and undisguised state of it, would not have so well served the shocking purpose to which it is applied. But that the reader may know whereabouts he is, when carried over to such a new ground for his faith and hope in the great matter of Everlasting Salvation ; it is necessary to give a somewhat fuller view, of this same Theory of *Animalcular Generation*.

ANTONY LEEUWENHOEK †, a man remarkable in his time for a singular improvement of microscopes,

—was

* Compare this account of *human* generation, with his account of the *Divine Generation*—as represented in the preceding Discourse, p. 38, 39.

† This Gentleman was born at Delft in Holland, anno 1632. And, by the Printer’s Preface to a volume of his works, published in

—was still more remarkable, for a singular use which he made of them. By looking into the *little world* through these glasses—he made wonderful discoveries (as he said) of many things, which had never been known or imagined by any person before. His principal discoveries were, of creatures called *animalcules*, *little animals*,—prodigiously little indeed, as will quickly appear. Of these (he said) he discovered most amazing multitudes, in different sorts of fluids; and had even seen about an hundred thousands of them, in a picking of his teeth which was no bigger than a grain of sand. Particularly, he professed to have seen above *ten thousand* animalcules, of some particular sort,—swimming in a particle of *seminal fluid* as small as a grain of sand, no thicker than the hundredth part of an inch; and yet they must have been swimming

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in the year 1722, he appears to have been alive about that time. His works were printed in Latin, making four *Quarto* volumes; under this title, *Arcana Naturæ detecta*. These volumes contain a series of his Epistles; mostly to the Royal Society at London, of which he was admitted a member: And many of these epistles are upon the *animalcular* subject; the first of them bearing date in January 1680, and the last of them in November 1716.

He told,----that he laid his account with obtaining the assent but of few, to the truth of his observations. Accordingly, these were impugned by several of his co-temporary writers; and exploded, as ridiculous fancies: Yea he complains, as far down as September 1715, of his being “ teased with contradictions.” And the Secretary of the Royal Society had used the freedom of writing to him, that though “ his opinion was vastly ingenuous and witty; yet he believed that it would have many antagonists and gainsayers.”

there at large, as in a great ocean ! For it is said that, when put close together, *three thousand millions* of them (above four times the number, according to some calculations, of all the human kind on the face of the whole earth at any one time !) will not exceed the bulk of such a grain of sand !—At the same time, these animalcules are said to be brisk and lively ; never a moment at rest.

Whether such wonderful, wonderful things were ever really seen, or only imagined,—is of no consequence for being disputed in this place ; let all pass, for any to believe it who please : But the finishing wonder yet remains, which cannot be so easily passed. And this is : That, in every instance of generation, some *one* of these animalcules turns out to be a child ; while many thousands, rather many millions of them, all co-existing,—do at the same time go to wreck and waste for ever ! Now this is what nobody can pretend to have ever seen, by microscopes or otherways : It is wholly a child of fancy, a creature of mere imagination ; and how wonderful are the powers of imagination !

After all, there are various subjects of controversy in this same Theory of *Animalcular Generation*, among the believers of it ; upon which the Clergyman might harmlessly employ his boasted talent of *Investigation* : and of these we may give a brief hint. As

1. Whether all animalcules, as some would have it, were created in the beginning ? And if so, the first man must have had all his natural posterity actually alive

alive in himself,—under the form of brisk animalcules; even co-ordinate millions of them, more than the number of his *immediate* posterity: And each of these having others *cased* by millions within itself, and each of these again in like manner,—and so on, without any conceivable end; to be *uncased*, in the course of successive generations: Every other man being in the same situation, with regard to all his posterity, real or possible; beyond all stretches of the rankest imagination:—While most contemptible parcels of these animalcules have turned out to be men and women, in the long course of generations; the other prodigiously prodigious multitudes of them having been all left to perish, as quite useless! Or,

2. Whether the animalcules do not propagate their kind, by a succession of internal generations,—amazingly more quick and numerous, than that of the external generations on the face of the earth; for the Dutch Philosopher tells,—that he had found above *two hundred thousands* of them* propagated in a course of generations from *one*, all in the space of *nine* days? As,

3. Whether these animalcules be not, in a proper mixture, male and female; as they have been observed of somewhat different forms? Again,

4. Whether these animalcules be originally alive in every man; or if they become alive in him, only when he arrives at fourteen or fifteen years of age? And,

5. Whether

* No less than 262,144!

5. Whether it be the very life of the animalcule that is continued in the child ; or if this gives place to another sort of life, at what is called the time of quickening in the womb ? Moreover,

6. Whether the animalcules turn out to a different form from that which they originally had ; like some creatures, which are worms in one season of the year,—and butterflies in another ? Or

7. Whether these animalcules are all originally of the human form ; as it has been given out that some of them, when seen uncased from a membrane inclosing them,—have been observed in the perfect shape or appearance of pretty boys or girls ?

Such are the subjects of controversy, in the Animalcular Theory, which have never yet been decided ; and one may well say never will,—otherways than by exploding the whole, with just indignation, as a most idle and unaccountable figment. Yet so essential is it to the Clergyman's New Scheme of religion, so much the foundation and chief corner-stone of his new fabrick ; that, when it is pulled out, the whole must tumble down into a heap of rubbish.

It yet remains to give some account of the new *additional substance* which he has boldly communicated to that theory ; for giving it some face of accommodation to his theological purpose. As,

I. The

1. The Dutch Philosopher says nothing about essences and subsistences and necessary existences, in this affair. But, beside the oddness of ascribing *necessary existence* to a *human Father*,—and to *each* of the millions of animalcules which he is supposed to have within himself*; the Clergyman tells us, that the animalcule in such a Father is “ *one* with him in *essence*,—yet distinguished from him by its individual *substance* :” While the reader is not properly cautioned against taking that essence for being *numerically one*,—and the subsistence for being *personal* !

2. The Dutch Philosopher is quite positive, that it is wholly the animalcule which turns out to be the man,—so as (abstracting from the infusion of a rational soul) to be a simple or *uncompounded person* ; having no sort of dependence upon the mother, but for the nourishment by which its

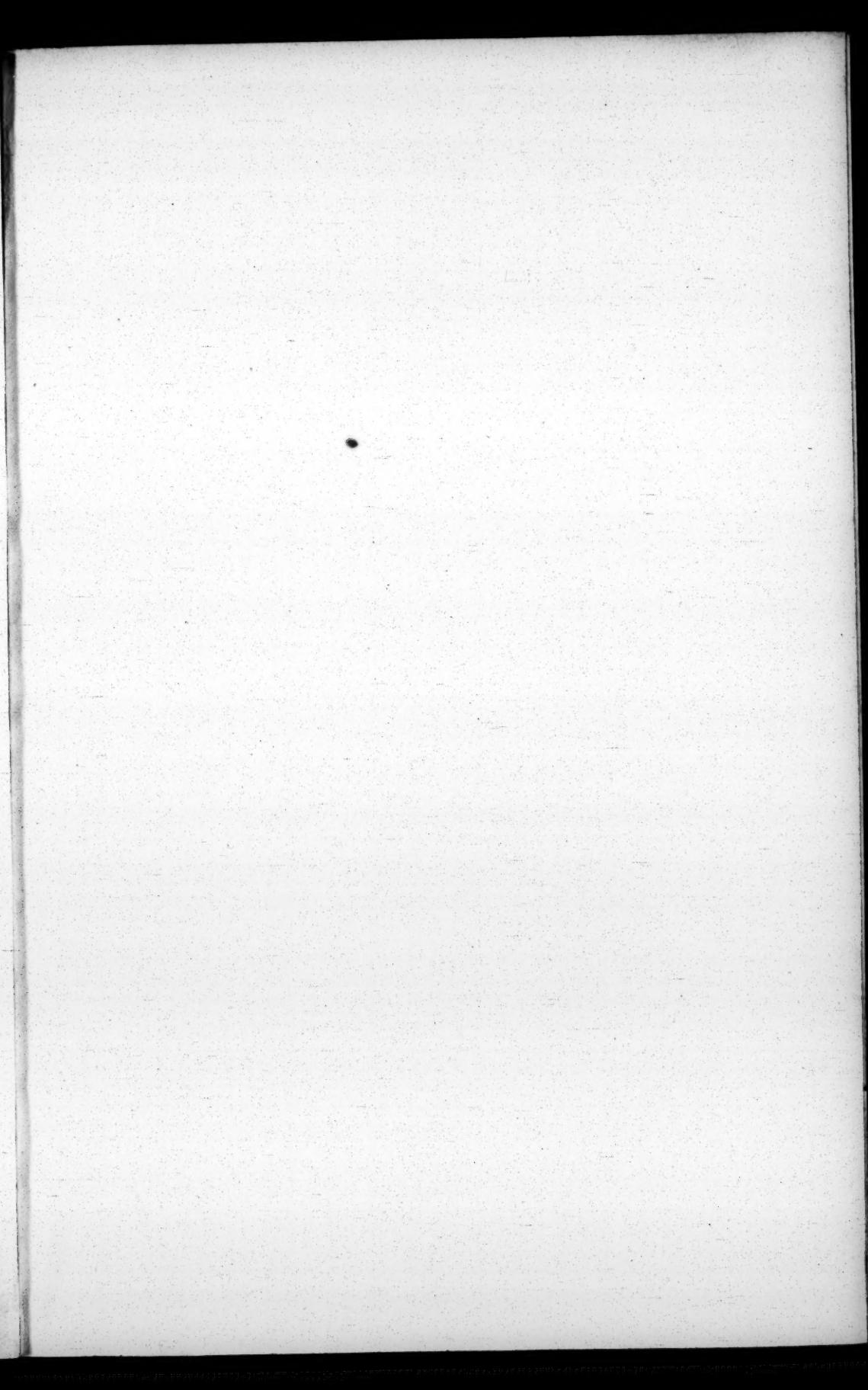
* *Necessary existence* is a Divine attribute; unless that phrase should be taken in a very new and senseless sense,---as holding equally true of every thing, even the most accidental and occasional : That though it might not have been, and may cease to be,---yet the thing *necessarily is while it is*, or *so long as it is* ; because nothing can both *be* and *not be* at the same time ! But so far as the Clergyman has, by loose language, got some air of *divinity* put upon *human generation* ; he was still the nearer his purpose, for putting an air of *humanity* upon the *Divine Generation* !

its parts are dilated in a proper form. Yet the Clergyman talks high of an *additional substance* derived from the mother,—some kind of female substance, even an *additional nature** : By which the animalcule (abstracting from a rational soul, which is not pretended to be derived from the mother) turns out to be a *complex person* ; even consisting of *two* different animal natures, some-way united into *one person* !

And so, at last, he has got the Theory of **Animalcular Generation** most daringly accommodated,—for bringing in the eternal *Logos*, the personal *Word of God* (O dreadful !) to supply the place of a Father's *animalcule* ; in a pretended *temporal Generation* of the **SON OF GOD**.

I could not expect, nor have confidence to ask the serious Reader's pardon ; for entertaining him with the above view of such wild and (as now applied) wicked reveries : Had I not to plead a necessity of it,—for a proper exposing of this new Heresy, which strikes at the root of *The Faith once delivered unto the Saints.*

* P. 12, 27.



1474 f. 27.